

## **Food safety governance in Zimbabwe: Challenges, regulatory gaps, and strategies for global compliance**

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### **Abstract**

Food safety is a critical global public health issue, with foodborne illnesses identified as one of the leading causes of mortality worldwide. This study provides a comprehensive review of Zimbabwe's food safety control legislative framework system, focusing on its legislative and regulatory framework and compliance with international standards. The research employed qualitative methods, including document analysis and key informant interviews.

The results show that Zimbabwe had a broad food safety framework comprising 15 Acts and 31 regulations overseen by multiple ministries. However, many of these Acts and regulations are outdated and need revision to meet emerging global food safety standards. Additionally, the food safety legislation framework is characterised by fragmentation and oversight by multiple agencies, leading to duplicated efforts, jurisdictional overlaps, and inefficiencies in enforcing standards. The study also highlights challenges faced by the three public food control laboratories where a lack of coordination and centralised data sharing impedes effective regulatory oversight. The findings reveal the urgent need for regulatory updates, improved inter-agency collaboration, and alignment with international standards to enhance food safety and protect public health. Recommendations include harmonising Zimbabwe's food control system under a centralised framework to promote collaboration among agencies, eliminate redundancies, and create a cohesive approach to food safety management.